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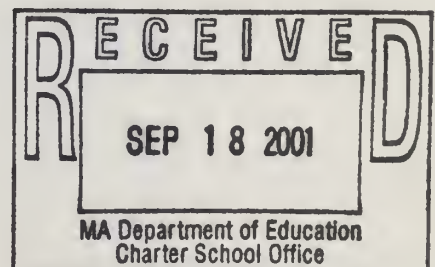
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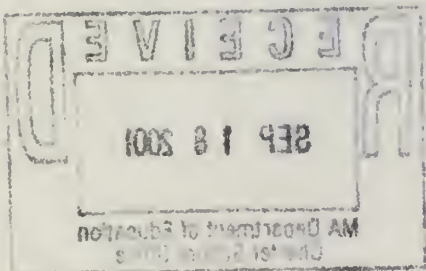
L I B R A R Y

Springfield Charter School for Excellence

Charter Prospectus

Presented to: The Massachusetts Department of Education
Applicant: Springfield Coalition for Educational Options, Inc.





Charter Applicant Information Sheet

Proposed Charter School: Springfield Charter School for Excellence

School Address (if known): Not available

School Location (City/Town): Springfield

Name of Group Applying for the Charter: Springfield Coalition for Educational Options, Inc.

Contact Person: John Bednaz

Address: 154 Bacon Road

City: Springfield State: MA Zip: 01119

Daytime Tel: (413) 272-2363 Fax:

E-mail: john33naz@aol.com

The proposed school will open in the fall of school year: ☐ 2002-03 ☒ 2003-04

| School Year | Grade Levels | Total Student Enrollment |
|-------------|--------------|--------------------------|
| First Year | K-5 | 405 |
| Second Year | K-6 | 480 |
| Third Year | K-7 | 555 |
| Fourth Year | K-8 | 630 |
| Fifth Year | K-8 | 655 |

Will this be a Regional Charter School?: ☐ Yes ☒ No

School districts from which students are expected to come: Springfield



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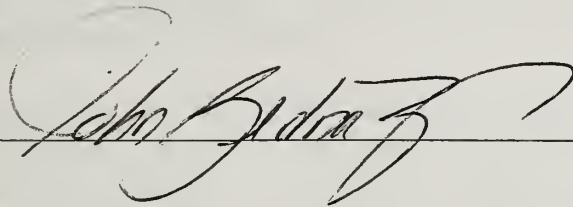
Commonwealth Charter School Certification Statement

Proposed Charter School Name: Springfield Charter School for Excellence

Proposed School Location (City/Town): Springfield

I hereby certify that the information submitted in this application is true to the best of my knowledge and belief; that this application has been or is being sent to the superintendent of all the districts from which we intend to draw students; and further I understand that, if awarded a charter, the proposed school shall be open to all students on a space available basis, and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed, sex, ethnicity, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, age, ancestry, athletic performance, special need, or proficiency in the English language, and academic achievement. This is a true statement, made under the penalties of perjury.

Signature of
Authorized Person



Date

9/13/01

Print/Type Name John Bednaz

Executive Summary

The proposed **Springfield Charter School for Excellence** is about **opportunity**. Opportunity for: students to obtain a top-notch education that will prepare them for success in life; families to be engaged in their youngsters' education; and, teachers to use their talents in a school-setting that rewards ingenuity and academic success.

Our Board is comprised of people from different backgrounds – lifelong city residents, civic officials, and community advocates – who have focused on our shared goal of improving public school opportunities for children in Springfield.

We know that many promising efforts to improve our schools have been initiated in recent years. Still, the need for this school is clear. According to recent data issued by the Massachusetts Department of Education:

- **0%** of Springfield school district students scored “Advanced” on the 4th grade English Language Arts MCAS exam and only 7% scored “Proficient.”
- **Only 3%** of district students scored “Advanced” on the 4th grade Mathematics MCAS, and only 13% were “Proficient.”
- **Only 1%** of district 8th grade students scored “Proficient” on the 8th grade English Language Arts exam, 77% failed the Mathematics portion, 76% failed the Science and Technology portion, and 79% failed the History and Social Science exam.”
- **61%** of district 10th grade students failed the English Language Arts MCAS, and **77%** failed the Mathematics portion of the exam.

While these statistics may not tell the whole story, they illustrate the need for a school that helps all students succeed on the MCAS exams and meets the Commonwealth's learning standards as outlined in the curriculum frameworks. Without a strong foundation, these students will always be “playing catch-up” to their peers – the same individuals they will be competing with for college admissions and career opportunities. It is for this reason that we as a Board have decided to focus on a K-8th grade elementary school, and also, is why we chose National Heritage Academies as our educational partner. National Heritage Academies has built a reputation for offering a rigorous liberal arts curriculum for K-8 public charter schools that focuses on mastery of all subjects, particularly in the core areas of reading, language arts, mathematics and science. We are excited that our charter school proposal embraces the *Effective Schools Research* model, developed by Harvard University's Professor Ronald R. Edmonds as a guide to creating schools that will help all students achieve academic success. Edmonds' research revealed the following key aspects to developing schools that can provide all children – including at-risk students – with a quality education: safe and orderly environment; clear school mission; strong instructional leadership; high expectations; numerous opportunities to learn and significant student time on task; frequent monitoring of student progress; and excellent home-to-school relations.

Accordingly, the **Springfield Charter School for Excellence** will:

- **Provide** each student with a program of study characterized by a strong, balanced core curriculum aligned with Massachusetts' learning standards;
- **Encourage** parental and staff involvement through six parent-teacher committees – Curriculum, Technology, Leadership Development, Library, Grounds and Facility, and Boosters. A parent will chair each committee, and in turn, serve on the School

Leadership Team, the advisory board to the charter school's Principal and Board of Trustees;

- **Encourage** strong ties and communication between families and teachers, including through *Academy Link*, National Heritage Academies' web-based program that allows parents to constantly monitor their children's progress and easily communicate with teachers;
- **Monitor** student performance and quickly identify learning gaps through daily learning exercises, classroom assessments, group and individual projects, nationally referenced standardized tests (Metropolitan Achievement Test), and required Massachusetts' assessments;
- **Implement** a code of conduct designed to provide students with a safe, and orderly school environment in which learning can take place without disruption; and,
- **Focus** on leadership development of all students by emphasizing a different character quality each month.

I. Charter school mission statement and purposes

The mission of Springfield Partners for Excellence is:

“Providing all students with the opportunity for academic success as detailed in the Commonwealth’s curriculum frameworks and measured by the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System, and the charter school’s accountability plan.”

II. How will the school demonstrate academic success?

A. Learning Standards

The following are the Learning Standards for the **four core subjects only** (we are, however, able to provide a complete list of our standards and grade specific benchmarks upon request):

English Language Arts

1. Students will read and comprehend general and technical material.
2. Students will demonstrate the ability to write clear and grammatically correct sentences, paragraphs, and compositions.
3. Students will focus on meaning and communication as they listen, speak, view, read and write in personal, social, occupational, and civic contexts.
4. Students will use the English language effectively.
5. Students will read and analyze a wide variety of classic and contemporary literature and other texts to seek information, ideas, enjoyment, and understanding of their individuality, our common heritage and common humanity, and the rich diversity in our society.
6. Students will learn to communicate information accurately and effectively and demonstrate their expressive abilities by creating oral, written, and visual texts that enlighten and engage an audience.
7. Students will demonstrate, analyze, and reflect upon the skills and processes used to communicate through listening, speaking, viewing, reading, and writing.
8. Students will explore and use the characteristics of different types of texts, aesthetic elements, and mechanics – including text structure, figurative and descriptive language, spelling, punctuation, and grammar—to construct and convey meaning.
9. Students will demonstrate understanding of the complexity of enduring issues and recurring problems by making connections and generating themes within and across texts.
10. Students will apply knowledge, ideas, and issues drawn from texts to their lives and the lives of others.
11. Students will define and investigate important issues and problems using a variety of resources, including technology, to explore and create texts.
12. Students will develop and apply personal, shared, and academic criteria for the enjoyment, appreciation, and evaluation of their own and others’ oral, written, and visual texts.

Math

1. Students recognize similarities and generalize patterns, use patterns to create models and make predictions, describe the nature of patterns and relationships, and construct representations of mathematical relationships.
2. Students describe the relationships among variables, predict what will happen to one variable as another variable is changed, analyze natural variation and sources of variability, and compare patterns of change.
3. Students develop spatial sense, use shape as an analytic and descriptive tool, identify characteristics and define shapes, identify properties and describe relationships among shapes.
4. Students identify locations of objects, identify location relative to other objects, and describe the effects of transformations (e.g., sliding, flipping, turning, enlarging, reducing) on an object.
5. Students compare attributes of two objects, or of one object with a standard (unit), and analyze situations to determine what measurements(s) should be made and to what level of precision.
6. Students collect and explore data, organize data into a useful form, and develop skill in presenting and reading data displayed in different formats.
7. Students examine data and describe characteristics of a distribution, relate data to the situation from which they arose, and use data to answer questions convincingly and persuasively.
8. Students draw defensible inferences about unknown outcomes, make predictions, and identify the degree of confidence they have in their predictions.
9. Students experience counting and measuring activities to develop intuitive sense about numbers, develop understanding about properties of numbers, understand the need for and existence of different sets of numbers, and investigate properties of special numbers.
10. Students recognize that numbers are used in different ways such as counting, measuring, ordering and estimating, understand and reduce multiple representations of a number, and translate among equivalent representations.
11. Students investigate relationships such as equality, in equality, inverses, facts and multiples, and represent and compare very large and very small numbers.
12. Students understand and use various types of operations (e.g., addition, subtraction, multiplication, division) to solve problems.
13. Students analyze problems to determine an appropriate process for solution, and use algebraic notations to model or represent problems.
14. Students develop an understanding of the notion of certainty and of probability as a measure of the degree of likelihood that can be assigned to a given event based on the knowledge available, and make critical judgments about claims that are made in probabilistic situations.
15. Students investigate practical situations such as scheduling, routing, sequencing, networking, organizing and classifying, and analyze ideas like recurrence relations, induction, iteration, and algorithm design.

Science

1. Students will ask questions that help them learn about the world; design and conduct investigations using appropriate methodology and technology; learn from books and other sources of information; communicate finds of investigations, using appropriate technology.
2. Students will analyze claims for their scientific merit and explain how scientists decide what constitutes scientific knowledge; show how science is related to other ways of knowing;

show how science and technology affect our society; show how people of diverse cultures have contributed to and influenced developments in science.

3. Students will apply an understanding of cells of the functioning of multicellular organisms, including how cells grow, develop and reproduce.
4. Students will use classification systems to describe groups of living things; compare and contrast differences in the life cycles of living things; investigate and explain how living things obtain and use energy; analyze how parts of living things are adapted to carry out specific functions.
5. Students will investigate and explain how characteristics of living things are passed on through generations; explain why organisms within a species are different from one another; explain how new traits can be established by changing or manipulating genes.
6. Students will explain how scientists construct and scientifically test theories concerning the origin of life and evolution of species; compare ways that living organisms are adapted to survive and reproduce in their environments and explain how species change through time.
7. Students will explain how parts of an ecosystem are related and how they interact; explain how energy is distributed to living things in an ecosystem; investigate and explain how communities of living things change over a period of time; describe how materials cycle through an ecosystem and get reused in the environment; analyze how humans and the environment interact.
8. Students will measure and describe the things around us; explain what the world around us is made of; identify and describe forms of energy; explain how electricity interacts with matter.
9. Students will investigate, describe and analyze ways in which matter changes; explain how visible changes in matter are related to atoms and molecules; explain how changes in matter are related to changes in energy and how living things and human technology change matter and transform energy.
10. Students will describe how things around us move, explain why things move as they do, and demonstrate and explain how we control the motions of objects; relate motion to energy and energy conversions.
11. Students will describe sounds and sound waves; explain shadows, color, and other light phenomena; measure and describe vibrations and waves; explain how waves and vibrations transfer energy.
12. Students will describe the earth's surface; how the earth's features changes over time; analyze effects of technology on the earth's surface and resources.
13. Students will describe the characteristics of water and demonstrate where water is found on earth; how water moves; analyze the interaction of human activities with the hydrosphere.
14. Students will investigate and describe what makes up weather and how it changes from day to day, season to season and over long periods of time; what causes different kinds of weather; analyze the relationships between human activities and the atmosphere.
15. Students will compare and contrast our planet and sun to other planets and star systems; describe and explain how objects in the solar system move; explain scientific theories as to the origin of the solar system; explain how we learn about the universe.

Social Studies

1. Students will sequence chronologically the following eras of American history and key events within these eras in order to examine relationships and to explain cause and effect: The Meeting of Three Worlds (beginning to 1620); Colonization and Settlement (1685-1763); Revolution and the New Nation (1754-1815); Expansion and Reform (1801-1861); and Civil War and Reconstruction (1850-1877); The Development of the Industrial United

States (1870-1900); the Emergence of Modern America (1890-1930); The Great Depression and World War II (1929-1945); Post War United States (1934-1970); and the Contemporary United States (1968-present).

2. Students will understand narratives about major eras of American and world history by identifying the people involved, describing the setting, and sequencing the events.
3. Students will reconstruct the past by comparing interpretations written by others from a variety of perspectives and creating narratives from evidence.
4. Students will evaluate key decisions made at critical turning points in history by assessing their implications and long-term consequences.
5. Students will describe, compare, and explain the locations and characteristics of places, cultures, and settlements.
6. Students will describe, compare, and explain the locations and characteristics of economic activities, trade, political activities, migration, information flow, and the interrelationships among them.
7. Students will describe and compare characteristics of ecosystems, states, regions, countries, major world regions, and patterns and explain the processes that created them.
8. Students will describe and explain the causes, consequences, and geographic context of major global issues and events.
9. Students will identify the purposes of national, state, and local governments in the United States, describe how citizens organize government to accomplish their purposes, and assess their effectiveness.
10. Students will explain the meaning and origin of the ideas, including the core democratic values express in the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and other Foundational documents of the United States.
11. Students will describe the political and legal processes created to make decisions, seek consensus and resolve conflicts in a free society.
12. Students will explain how American government institutions, at the local, state, and federal levels, provide for the limitation and sharing of power and how the nation's political system provides for the exercise of power.
13. Students will understand how the world is organized politically, the formation of American foreign policy and the roles the United State plays in the international arena.
14. Students describe and demonstrate how the economic forces of scarcity and choice affect the management of personal financial resources, shape consumer decisions regarding the purchase, use, and disposal of goods and services and affect the economic well-being of individuals and society.
15. Students will explain and demonstrate how businesses confront scarcity and choice when organizing, producing, and using resources, and when supplying the marketplace.
16. Students will describe how government decisions on taxation, spending, public goods and regulation impact what is produced, how it is produced, and who receives the benefits of production.
17. Students will explain how a free market economic system works, as well as other economic systems, to coordinate and facilitate the exchange, production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services.
18. Students will describe how trade generates economic development and interdependence and analyze the resulting challenges and benefits for individuals, producers, and government.
19. Students will acquire information from books, maps, newspapers, data sets and other sources, organize and present the information in maps, graphs, charts and timelines, interpret the meaning and significance of information, and use a variety of electronic technologies to assist in accessing and meaning information.

20. Students will conduct investigations by formulating a clear statement of a question, gathering and organizing information from a variety of sources, analyzing and interpreting information, formulating and testing hypotheses, reporting results both orally and in writing, and making use of appropriate technology.
21. Students will state an issue clearly as a question of public policy, trace the origins of the issue, analyze various perspectives people bring to the issue and evaluate possible ways to resolve the issue.
22. Students will engage their peers in constructive conversation about matters of public concern by clarifying issues, considering opposing views, applying democratic values, anticipating consequences, and working toward making decisions.
23. Students will compose coherent written essays that express a position on a public issue and justify the position with reasoned arguments.
24. Students will consider the effects of an individual's actions on other people, how one acts in accordance with the rule of law, and how one acts in a virtuous and ethically responsible way as a member of society.

B. Educational Program

Philosophy

Our educational philosophy is best articulated by Dr. Marva Collins in her book, *Marva Collins' Way*: "My approach was to teach the total child. A teacher should help develop a child's character, help build a positive self-image. I was concerned about everything—attitude, manners, grooming."

Dr. Collins calls for a return to a classical education: "I always thought it better to teach a child how to attack a word phonetically . . . I taught my students how to add and subtract, but I also taught them that arithmetic is a Greek word meaning "to count" and that numbers were called digits after the Latin word "digitus", meaning finger."

This theme is continued in the work of Jeanne Chall, *The Achievement Challenge*. Chall's study takes a broad view of teacher centered vs. student centered. She concludes that quantitative, qualitative and historical evidence supports traditional teacher centered methods as the most effective.

Furthermore, James Coleman, as outlined in an article by E.D. Hirsh, Jr. "*Education Matters*, Spring 2000,": "a rich demanding curriculum; a structured, orderly environment; lots of explicit instruction; and the expectation that all children reach minimal competency in every subject by grade's end provide the best academic results."

The school will provide each student with a program of study that is challenging and effective. The instructional program is characterized by a strong, balanced classical curriculum with an emphasis on the basic skills and content knowledge. In addition, the character development focus will be infused into the instructional program in an effort to help students develop into caring and responsible citizens.

The curriculum has been carefully aligned in order to meet the learning objectives and skills addressed in the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. This alignment shall prepare **all students**

for the required MCAS assessments. Should we be fortunate to be selected by the Commissioner to submit a final application, this alignment will be illustrated and explained in great detail.

Our proposal embraces the Hirsch Core Knowledge Sequence, which is a consensus-based model of specific content guidelines that provides a solid, coherent foundation of learning for students in the elementary grades. It represents a first and ongoing attempt to state specifically a core of shared knowledge that children should learn in American schools. The sequence offers a planned progression of specific knowledge in history, geography, mathematics, science, English, literature and fine arts. It is a guide to coherent content from grade to grade, designed to encourage steady academic progress as children build their knowledge and skills from one year to the next.

Reading

We believe that successful readers must be given all of the tools necessary to read. This includes an intensive phonics program beginning in Kindergarten. The systematic introduction and practice of sounds from Kindergarten through the first marking period of second grade enables all children to be firmly rooted in the basics of the English language.

Students will be instructed from the very beginning of their reading experience that there is important meaning in the text. Comprehension skills will be modeled, taught, and evaluated at every grade level.

The schoolteachers will work to develop fluency in all readers. Children will be given many opportunities to read both silently and aloud. Teachers will model fluency and expression at every grade level through the oral presentation of excellent literature.

Our students will regularly read classical children's literature. It is our desire to expose them to outstanding works in the field of children's literature with a strong emphasis on books containing rich language and vocabulary.

The Open Court Publishing Company's *Collections for Young Scholars* is a comprehensive program that will prepare students to lead productive lives in twenty-first century society. *Collections for Young Scholars* is built upon principles that reflect the consensus of leading literary researchers, and practitioners, regarding what is essential for reading success. Initial reading instruction relies on the explicit teaching of sounds, on the blending of sounds into words, and the leverage of using this knowledge for reading and writing. *Collections for Young Scholars* is a comprehensive program that addresses all aspects of English and reading.

English

All students will be expected to develop a strong understanding of and appreciation for the English language. A challenging spelling program includes weekly spelling lists and quizzes. Students will be instructed in all areas of grammar and punctuation including topics such as roots, prefixes, suffixes, and subject/verb agreement. Students will study vocabulary with an emphasis on appropriate vocabulary from content areas. Classes will also review grammar, punctuation, and spelling through *Daily Oral Language* exercises.

Teachers will emphasize that neatness counts and excellent penmanship will be expected at all levels. Students will be instructed in proper size and formation through regular handwriting lessons.

Students will have many opportunities to develop their skills in the area of composition. Teachers will offer extensive instruction and modeling of the writing process beginning in the early elementary grades. Students will explore all forms of writing including descriptive, persuasive, and creative.

Students will be instructed in giving oral presentations. Teachers will show students how to prepare their materials and deliver their presentation in a professional manner appropriate for their grade level. Students will frequently give research presentations related to topics being studied in areas such as history, geography, and science.

Mathematics

Saxon Math is built upon the belief that the most effective way for students to learn is through a gentle repetition extended over a considerable period of time. At Saxon, they call this method “incremental development.” At its simplest, incremental development consists of the introduction of topics in bits and pieces (increments), permitting the assimilation of one facet of a concept before the next facet is introduced. Both facets are then practiced together until another is introduced.

The incremental structure of topics is combined with continuous review so that all previously learned material is reviewed in every lesson for the entire year. Topics are never dropped, but instead are increased in complexity and practiced every day, providing the time required for concepts to become totally familiar.

Lastly, students are shown how to apply what they have learned to new situations. Genuine learning is demonstrated not only through the understanding of a concept, but also through the ability to apply that concept to new situations.

Other features of *Saxon Math* include:

- New objectives are introduced through carefully selected group activities.
- Children use manipulatives, engage in discussions, and work in cooperative groups to help one another learn.
- The mastery of concepts develops from hands-on experience to symbolic representation.

Science

The science curriculum focuses on the established goals and objectives for Science Teaching. Hirsch Core Knowledge Sequence provides much of the necessary content to meet these standards. Science includes the study of life science, earth science, and physical science.

The teachers will have a strong commitment to hands-on, experimental science activities. Students will work extensively with appropriate materials, measuring devices, and scientific instruments. A science specialist will work closely with teachers and students on a weekly basis.

History, Geography, And Government

Thematic units have been developed in History, Geography, and Government. These units address the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and the Hirsch Core Knowledge Sequence. We do not use textbooks, but rather a variety of teacher-developed instructional materials are used to develop each thematic unit and accomplish the learning objectives through project-based learning.

The History content is based on the Hirsch Core Knowledge Sequence. This sequence gives students an excellent understanding of ancient, United States, and world history. A strong emphasis is placed on the uniqueness of the history of the United States and the people who shaped this great country. Teachers model a respect for America and her heritage.

An understanding of geography is essential in the study of History; therefore, significant time is given to the instruction of geographically related topics. The Geography curriculum is based primarily on the material covered in the Hirsch Core Knowledge Sequence.

Students will be instructed in understanding the role of government and the political process in the United States. An emphasis will be placed on the importance of being an informed citizen who participates in the political process.

Art

Through the weekly art classes, students will explore many different genres of this area. Students will participate in hands-on art projects throughout the year. Frequently these projects will be related to topics currently being studied with their classroom teacher. Students will also be exposed to many great artists and their works through art appreciation lessons.

Music

Students will explore many periods of music during their weekly classes. Students will spend time learning music appreciation and study great composers and their works. Theory is also an important part of music education, and children will learn many basics in this area. There will be many opportunities for the students to sing as a part of the class and as a part of the yearly school-wide musical programs. Generally two music programs will be held each year.

Physical Education

Physical Education helps students develop in three areas. Students will develop individual skills through direct instruction and guided practice. Students will learn about teamwork through playing team games. Lastly, students will learn about the importance of sportsmanship through instruction and modeling by the instructor.

Library

Each class will visit the library weekly. Students will have the opportunity to read, check out books, and receive instruction in different areas of library usage.

Technology

Each classroom will have a computer station. In addition, students will have access to a computer lab in the media center with one instructional period per week. As the year progresses, it is hoped that additional technology will be integrated into the instructional program. A comprehensive technology plan is in place.

All this points to a well-rounded, rigorous educational program. As an organizing group of a charter school, we are excited by the thought that education is the great equalizer. With an education a child can achieve. With an education a child can taste success. Imagine the potential waiting to be unleashed by an education. Fertile, eager, young minds, hopeful to become.

C. Performance Standards

Student Performance

GOAL: We expect each student in grades K-8 to master content standards for each grade level before progressing to the next grade.

MEASUREMENT: Daily/weekly quizzes and periodic testing in each subject; standardized tests (see below); and, in the designated grades, student performance on the MCAS exams. The following are the assessment goals for the first five years:

- Comparing the total battery grade equivalent scores on the Metropolitan Achievement Test, 7th Edition (MAT7). The first year baseline data will be collected. The following growth rates are expected each year:

| | | |
|------------|-----|------------------------|
| Year Two | 1.1 | grade equivalent years |
| Year Three | 1.2 | grade equivalent years |
| Year Four | 1.3 | grade equivalent years |
| Year Five | 1.4 | grade equivalent years |

- Comparing the total battery scores on the MAT7. The first year baseline data will be collected. The number of students that score over the 50th percentile will increase each year over baseline data at the minimum rates:

| | |
|------------|----|
| Year Two | 5% |
| Year Three | 6% |
| Year Four | 7% |
| Year Five | 8% |

- Comparing the total reading, math, and language scores on the MAT7. The first year baseline data will be collected. Scores will increase at a minimum by the following grade equivalent year increments as compared to baseline data.

| | <u>Reading</u> | <u>Math</u> | <u>Language Arts</u> |
|------------|----------------|-------------|----------------------|
| Year Two | 1.1 | 1.2 | 1.1 |
| Year Three | 1.2 | 1.3 | 1.2 |
| Year Four | 1.3 | 1.4 | 1.3 |
| Year Five | 1.4 | 1.5 | 1.4 |

- We expect that, after the first year of baseline results, the cumulative performance of students at the Springfield Charter School for Excellence will exceed that of the Springfield public school system and ultimately be at the highest level in Massachusetts.

D. Assessment System

Classroom Testing

In creating the assessment system, the most important factor of achievement is student mastery. This involves repeating a lesson until a lesson is mastered before continuing onto the next lesson.

In assessing math, students demonstrate their knowledge through speed drills. Lower elementary students review the math meeting board each morning providing the teacher with the opportunity to continually assess learning. Upper elementary students have daily quizzes. The goal in each case is to achieve mastery through repetition and review.

In Language Arts, students complete weekly spelling tests. Beginning in first grade, they participate in *Daily Oral Language* exercises. The Open Court reading program includes work sheets, quizzes, and tests that assist the teacher in understanding the progress of the student.

Science assessment is coordinated through the science specialist and the science team. The team has created a test bank that addresses all of the science objectives. Teachers are able to accommodate the test bank to their particular grade level.

The individual teacher creates Social Studies (History/Geography) assessments for grades K-5. Each of the strands and content standards for this core area are addressed. Teachers develop oral and written quizzes and tests. Other means of assessment are accomplished through individual and group projects.

The Hirsch Core Knowledge Sequence also provides tests as part of their series, *What Every Student Ought to Know*. Additionally, history, geography, government, and science are included in the Core Knowledge Sequence. Teachers develop their own units, tests, and quizzes.

Norm-referenced Test

A cognitive aptitude test, the Metropolitan Achievement Test, 7th Edition (MAT7), will be administered each fall to new students and each spring to currently enrolled students. This feedback system will initially use national, state, and local results of the MAT as benchmarks. The benchmarks will serve as the baseline data in increasing academic growth. This will allow the school to develop a performance weighted incentive compensation program for teaching personnel.

The MAT7 was chosen as it is the most widely used norm-referenced test. Assessing grades 1-8, it will provide a means to measure growth from year to year and will pinpoint areas in need of improvement.

MCAS

Students will participate in the Commonwealth's MCAS assessment program. Student performance and all relevant data will be reported to the Department of Education in accordance with state laws and regulations.

III. How will the school demonstrate organizational viability?

A. Market Analysis

1. Statement of Need

The City of Springfield enjoys a rich cultural and ethnic diversity. The past decade has featured significant growth in several minority populations, specially the Latino and African-American communities. Indeed, it is interesting to note that of the Commonwealth's forty state senatorial districts, only one, comprising Boston's Roxbury, Mattapan and Dorchester neighborhoods feature a larger collective minority population than that which constitutes the Hampden district represented by Senate Majority Leader Linda Melconian of Springfield. All demographic analysis of recent data suggests that this trend will continue.

Springfield's marked diversity presents significant and compelling challenges with respect to educational opportunities across the spectrum and most especially at the primary levels. We believe that this application presents a meaningful and deliberate proposal by which Springfield's existing and anticipated public school student population will be able to access a unique, intensive curriculum supported by the involvement of local parents who are unquestionably the most sensitive parties to the needs of the overall student population. We believe as well that the current performance of the Springfield Public School System, as previously noted, can only be enhanced by the establishment of the new Commonwealth charter school that involves the fulcrum input and policy direction of Springfield parents. The empirical data is indisputable with respect to the diversity of the public school population in Springfield and the challenge such a reality poses to the efficacy of the traditional public school model. An additional charter school in Springfield will compliment the systems ability to successfully meet future challenges and support a rich experience for segments of the population currently most in need.

B. School Governance and Management

1. Capacity

Our group has formed to further the opportunity for public education choice and to challenge parents and the community to be involved in promoting change and academic success among all of our students. We came together through mutual friends and professional associates and colleagues to help create new educational opportunities for Springfield-area students. As a group, we agree that one of the most effective means to achieve this goal is to "put our money where our mouth is," and help develop a new charter school.

John J. Bednaz

John Bednaz is currently a Housing Search Specialist with the New England Farm Workers' Council. In this capacity, John assesses housing needs for homeless families in our community and also helps place eligible families in affordable housing. He is active in the Springfield community, and, in addition to his full-time job, serves as the Associate Pastor for the Mount Calvary church in Springfield.

Jose Luis Claudio, Sr.

Jose Claudio is currently the Community Liaison for the New North Citizens' Council in Springfield. Jose's primary responsibility is to introduce community service programs to residents of the North End and bring more youth in the neighborhood into community awareness.

Brenda Montgomery

Brenda Montgomery currently works for the New England Farm Workers' Council as a Daycare Resource Specialist. Brenda also serves the community in a volunteer capacity, working with the American Cancer Society and the Field Association. Additionally, she has volunteered as a coordinator for Miss Black Teen and has trained and volunteered as a Court Appointed Special Advocate.

Cecile Rivera

Ms. Rivera is a property Manager Associate with Virgilio Property Management, Inc. Her responsibilities include administering tenant leases, customer service, and bookkeeping and data entry. Cecile received her Associate's Degree in Liberal Arts and Sciences from Holyoke Community College and is a graduate of the Holyoke public school system. She is fluent in both English and Spanish, and this will be a real asset to communicating with families as Springfield has a large and growing Hispanic population.

Isaias M. Rodriguez

Mr. Rodriguez has recently accepted the position of Community Liaison with the New England Farm Workers Council. Prior to this appointment, Isaias served as a Legislative Aid in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. He also served as a Long-Term substitute Special Education teacher for the Springfield public schools and is a 1995 graduate of Roger L. Putnam Vocational Technical H.S. in Springfield.

Advisors to the Board:

- 1) Legal Services – The Board has made arrangements, should we ultimately be granted a charter, to retain a law firm to serve the board and the charter school, including representing the board and school in all contract negotiations with education service providers and other vendors.
- 2) Educational Consultant – Dr. Arthur Eve has agreed to serve the board as a consultant and will help the board oversee the implementation and administration of our educational program, including all services to be provided by an educational service provider. Mr. Eve received his Ph.D. in Educational Administration from the University of Chicago and spent 30 years of experience as a Professor at the University of Massachusetts' School of Education.

2. Organizational Structure

Governance Structure. The charter school Board of Directors will assure that the school operates according to the terms and conditions of its authorizing contract as well as all applicable federal and state laws.

The Board of Directors will appoint officers, adopt bylaws and incorporate the school as a non-profit corporation. The Board will conduct business, including signing contracts, approving budgets and school policies, and exercise all powers in their capacity to manage the business of the school.

The Board is accountable for the fiscal and academic success of the school.

The school utilizes a specific school improvement structure to ensure appropriate input from all parties in the school improvement process. School committees comprised of parent and school staff will include: Technology, Leadership Development, Building and Grounds, Education, Library, Boosters, Hospitality, and Ambassadors. These chairs meet once a month to plan for the different aspects of the school and will support the school's leadership and Board of Directors.

Administrative Structure. The principal of the school shall serve as the general manager. It will be his/her responsibility to operate the day-to-day activities of the school. This includes managing the budget, implementing policies and maintaining good relations with the parents, students and employees of the school. Each staff member of the school shall know their specific duties and be expected to work individually and as a team to enhance the learning of all students.

The **teachers** shall provide instruction to students, work with parents on **parent/teacher committees** and work with the **Special Education Staff** in providing instruction to students with IEPs. These groups shall all report to the principal as well as rely on the principal for guidance.

Organizational Chart

